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A

S E R M O N

PREACH'D AT THE

CATHEDRAL-CHURCH

O F

N O R W I C H,

On THURSDAY, Jan. 30th. 1723.

Being the ANNIVERSARY of the MARTYRDOM
of King CHARLES the FIRST.

By SAMUEL SHUCKFORD, M. A.
Rector of SHELTON in NORFOLK.

C A M B R I D G E:

Printed by CORN. CROWNFIELD, Printer to
the UNIVERSITY; And are to be Sold by
him, and J. Knapton, Bookseller in St. Paul's
Church-Yard, LONDON, and the Booksellers
in Norwich, 1724.

NORWICH,

At a Court of Mayoralty held the 5th
Day of *February*, Anno Dom. 1723.

ORDERED,

That the Thanks of this Court be returned
to the Reverend Mr. *Shuckford* for his
Excellent Sermon Preached on the 30th
of *January* last, and that he be desired
to Print the Same,

Per Curiam



LODGE.

TO
THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
EDMUND HUNTON, Esq;
MAYOR,
AND THE
COURT OF ALDERMEN
OF THE
CITY OF NORWICH.

GENTLEMEN,

I Beg Leave to make Use of the Opportunity, you have given Me, to exprels the Joy, I have as a Native and a Citizen, in the Flourishing Estate of the City of NORWICH: It is, I dare say, a Satisfaction to all good Men to see so

Large and Considerable a Community so heartily attach'd to the Present Government, so steadily adhering to the Common Interest of their Country, and thereby, in the best and truest Manner, to their Own; and this with such a Conduct and Unanimity, that no Attempts of your Adversaries are able to defeat You.

I return You my humble Thanks, for that Part of my Preferment, which I Enjoy from You. I shall at all Times pray for your Prosperity, and wish You every Thing, that may make You a most Flourishing as well as a most Loyal City.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

SAM. SHUCKFORD.



DEUT. XXIX. 24.

Even all Nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this Land? What meaneth the Heat of this great Anger.

IF we look into the Dispensations of God's Providence both to Communities of Men and to particular Persons; We shall find many of them of such a Nature, as that at first Sight we may not apprehend the Reasons of them: God *maketh his Sun to Shine upon the Unjust as well as the Just*, Nay very often Wicked Men, Men, that must be odious in his Sight, are seen to Flourish, and to have, as it were, Marks of his Favour; whilst some extraordinary Calamities shall overwhelm Persons of the most conspicuous Piety, who, we should

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should think, might obtain the particular Blessings of Heaven.

THERE cannot perhaps be any Instance, that may set this Truth in a more remarkable Light, than the Fact, which this unhappy Day offers to our Consideration. Princes, as they are in the highest Stations, are conspicuous to the World: And I might say, that, as the Prince on this Day Martyred, was a Person of a distinguishing Virtue; as the Calamities, that fell upon Him, were the severest and most unnatural, that perhaps any Prince was ever tried with; so his Misfortunes must seem the more unaccountable: But then — tho' the Dispensations of Providence are sometimes of this Sort, yet we shall charge God very foolishly, if we determine that he has not wise and good Reasons for all his Dealings with the Sons of Men: The best Heathens have kept their Speculations free from this Absurdity; for the Light of Nature is sufficient to Teach us, that the Governor of the Universe must be Just, and rule the World with an unerring Wisdom.

THE Inequality of the Distributions of the Good and Evil of this Life is a Subject very easy to be stated by a Christian; and I shall not make this the Matter of my Discourse:

There

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There is a Circumstance in almost all the Evils, that happen to us, which we seldom attend to; and that is, that few or none of them *arise from the Dust*; under the Smart of Misfortunes we are apt to Complain; but if instead of that we would examine wisely, we should perhaps find, that the Inequality is not in Providence but in our Selves; The Circumstances of our Affairs, or the Actions of those about us, do by their natural Tendency raise the Troubles we lie under; We think Providence to bear hard upon us, when God only suffers Things to take their Course, and the Events to arise, which would arise without an extraordinary Interposition to prevent them: We might examine the Evils of Life in this View, and become the wiser for them; We might search the Causes of our Misfortunes, and having duly considered them, see what Instruction for our future Conduct we might learn by them. I shall beg Leave to turn your Thoughts this Way upon the unhappy Calamity, which this Day sets before us. And,

FIRST, I shall consider some Circumstances in the Misfortunes of the Martyred King, which might induce us to complain in the Words before us, *why has the Lord done thus unto Him*, what could mean *the Heat of so fierce an Anger*?

SECOND,

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SECONDLY, I shall set before you what the unhappy Causes really were, that began, continued, and compleated his Misfortunes.

THIRDLY, I shall enquire, what a wise and prudent View of this Affair would teach Us.

FIRST, Let us consider some Circumstances of our Martyr's Sufferings, which would induce us to complain of the Severity of Them; and These I think will abundantly appear, if We but consider the Nature of his Sufferings; The Cause for which he Suffered; The Quality of his Persecutors; or his own Virtue.

1st. IF we consider the Nature of his Sufferings: The highest as well as lowest of Mankind are indeed Subject to the Calamities of Human Life, and their higher Stations do often expose Them to many Fates, from which the lower Orders of Men live retir'd and secure; but there are some Evils, which Princes might seem to be shelter'd and exempt from: They must die, and *fall like other Men*; nay the Stroke of an Assassin, or the Attacks of Conspiracies and secret Treasons are sometimes Fatal to Them; but it will for ever appear a monstrous Calamity, for a Prince to be stripped by Degrees of his Dignity and Preheminence, convened before a Tribunal of his Subjects, and condemn'd to die as a Malefactor.

BUT

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BUT 2^{dly}, This will appear still more Shocking in the Case before us, if we consider the Cause in which this our Prince Suffered. His Enemies have taken Pains to represent Him, as a Destroyer of the Rights and Liberties of his People, and that it was necessary for Him to be cut off to save the Kingdom; And it would be but little to the Honour of his Memory, if there were no better Defence to be made for Him, than to suppose Him, as a King, uncontrollable: But there is a sufficient Vindication of King *Charles* the First; He died, not for endeavouring to overturn, but to support our Constitution: The late excellent *Bishop Fleetwood*, speaks of Him with Regard to the Church to this * Purpose, "No Prince, I will
" say no private Gentleman did ever under-
" stand the Constitution of our Church better;
" defend it with stronger Arguments; adhere
" to it with more Judgment; adorn it with
" better Manners; live up to it's good Prin-
" ciples with more Virtue; and no Prince but
" He did ever die in it's Defence. Any Per-
son, that will read his History may see, that the Contest between Him and his Enemies came at last to This, whether he would surrender up the Powers of a King, and set his Hand to raze the Foundations of that Plan of

* Sermon before the Lords, Jan. 30. 1709.

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Government, which is the known Happiness of our Nation: In this so good and great a Cause, he might well Hope for Safety and Success, even when He found Himself in a declining Condition. "I confess (said He in one " of * his Letters) that speaking as a Soldier " or a Statesman, there is no Probability but " of my Ruin; but as a Christian I must tell " you, That God will not suffer Rebels to " Prosper; And whatever personal Punishment " it shall please Him to inflict upon me, must " not make me Repine, much less give over " this Quarrel: for I know my Obligations " both in Honour and Conscience, not to injure my Successor nor forsake my Friends. We have, since this Day struggled with Glory and Success to preserve this happy Constitution of our Kingdom; and the many extraordinary Instances, in which Providence has been pleased to exert it self for it's Preservation, might induce us to ask, why it was suffered for a Time to fall in the Hands of a Prince wisely and religiously attach'd to it. But

3dly, LET us consider the Quality of his Enemies. All the Proceedings against the King, his Sentence and Execution, were made to bear a Venerable Name; to be the Act of the *People of England*; to carry a Form and Pre-

* Clar. Hist.

tence,

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tence, as if “ the whole Body Politic of a free
 “ Kingdom had rose in it’s Defence against a
 “ Tyrant, endeavouring the Dissolution of it,
 and indeed “ one might reasonably believe,
 “ that nothing less than an Universal Defection
 “ of three Nations could reduce a great King
 “ to so ugly a Fate. What then shall be said,
 when we consider the Circumstances that con-
 tributed to his Ruin? A Want of Unity, and
 a Weakness of Counsel continually blasted all
 Endeavours for his Safety and Service; and an
 unaccountable Success supported the Attempts
 of the Worst of those, that were engaged
 against Him; till a few private and obscure
 Men, none, if any of which, had ever raised
 themselves, to any share of the * Knowledge
 or Favour of their Prince, were possess of the
 Strength of the Kingdom; were able, to carry
 on their Schemes under the Protection and
 Authority of a disjointed Legislature, as far
 as they could obtain the Countenance and Fa-
 vour of it; and when the Eyes of all Men
 were, as it were, opened, and their very Par-
 liament opposed them, then to set a side That
 too; and in the Face of the Kingdom, to mur-
 der a Prince, who at that very Hour (says the
 Historian) had as great a Share in the Hearts
 and Affections of his Subjects in general,

* *The King knew the Faces of but two of the Persons appointed
 to judge Him.* Clarendon’s Hist. V. 3. p. 254. 255.

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was as much beloved, esteemed, and longed for by his People, as any of his Predecessors. But,

LASTLY, Let us consider the Kings Virtue; If Happiness in this World was designed to be the settled and constant Reward of Virtue, He must have been a very prosperous and happy Prince; for let us view Him, where we will, in the Court; in the Camp; in his Imprisonments; or at his Death; we must allow Him to have been a great and shining Pattern in a degenerate Age: There is no Time, nor is it fit for me to attempt so known a Character; the Hardship of his Fate will abundantly appear, if I say no more of Him, than in the Words of the Historian: “ If He was not the
“ greatest King; if He was without some Parts
“ and Qualities, which have made some Kings
“ great and happy; no other Prince was ever
“ unhappy, who was possessed of half his Virtues and Endowments, and so much without any Kind of Vice,

LET us now in the Second Place, consider, what the unhappy Causes really were, that began, continued, and compleated his Misfortunes. And

1st of all, The Beginning of the Troubles and Commotions of the Kingdom was evidently

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dently occasioned by Errors in the Government. “ The *King, tho’ He had an excellent
 “ Understanding, was not confident enough of
 “ it, which made Him often change his own
 “ Opinion for a Worse, and follow the Advice
 “ of Men, that neither judged nor intended
 “ so well as Himself; and He was hereby
 “ many Times led into new Ways and Courses,
 “ which did naturally tend to create public
 “ Disturbances: which instead of the clear and
 happy Prospects of an *English* Government,
 made Things look so dark, that *the wisest and
 best Men* thought *the Foundations of their Rights
 and Liberties in Danger to be destroyed*: “ Who-
 “ soever considers (says the Historian) the Acts
 “ of Power and Injustice of the Ministers, in
 “ the Intervals of Parliament, will not be
 “ much scandalized at the Warmth and Vivacity
 “ of those Meetings. It may be the Business
 of little Politicians to affect to dress up
 Kings in an insupportable Grandeur; but a
 Government will never be truly happy or secure,
 which destroys or unsettles the Happiness
 and Liberties of the People: The Christian
 Religion does indeed lay the best Foundation
 for the Security of Princes; for all the Terrors
 of another Life are levelled against Faction
 and Rebellion; but Christianity it self binds
 no Men to be Slaves; for the Scripture, what-

* Clarendon’s Hist.

ever

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ever has been absurdly pretended to the Contrary, has a just Latitude in these Matters: and if in one * Place Government is said to be *the Ordinance of God*, 'tis called expressly in † another *the Ordinance of Man*; and how strictly soever we are obliged to *render to Cæsar the Things that are Cæsars*, yet *Cæsar* has no Right to take from us those Things, that belong not to Him.

AN ‡ excellent Person of the Times we are treating of, in his greatest Complaints for the Peoples Property and Liberties, acknowledg'd the Goodness of the King's Temper; but alas! *If the Foundations be cast down, what can the Righteous do?* The Foundation of Government is the Welfare of the People; and tho' a Nation may be happily governed by an Arbitrary Prince; yet, where stated Laws have defined the Authority of the Government, and the Liberty of the Subject, nothing but an Adherence on both sides to the Constitution will be of sufficient Weight to keep such a State safe and secure from Storms and Ruin. I am loath to dwell too long upon these Things, or to apply them, as I might do, to the Case before us, but I could not but say thus much to them, because some Men have been so very

* Rom. XIII. 2. † 1 Pet. II. 13. ‡ Lord Falkland.

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fond of aspersing every Opinion as Factious and Seditious, which does but seem to limit or restrain the Will of Rulers: but how severely might it be remarked, that the other sort of Tenets have only been Snare s to tempt our Princes into their Ruin. Men may upon occasion make their Court by their Submissions, and pretend to devote themselves to a passive Virtue; but when brought to the Trial, the Reason and Practice of Mankind runs quite another Way.

A 2^d Thing, that encreased the Troubles of the King and Nation, was the pursuing some unhappy Schemes in Matters of Religion. The King himself had the justest Sentiments of the Christian Religion, as may appear to any one from his Excellent Letters and Conferences about it; and I shall not enquire, who it was, that misled Him, but this I may affirm, that the pressing an Uniformity, with the Appearance of an Army was the likeliest Way to prevent it for-ever. Kings have a Right to govern all their Subjects Ecclesiastical as well as Civil; and *Christian Kings* may be glorious *Defenders of the Faith*, and *Nursing Fathers of the Church*, by *Ministring Justice*, to the *Punishment of Wickedness and Vice*; and by *maintaining true Religion*, by *supporting Virtue*; But a Government will never possess it self of the
Hearts

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Hearts of the Subjects, by compelling or subduing their Opinions in Matters of Religion.

IF We look into the History of Mankind, We may see, that our later Ages have in these Points even sunk beneath the good natural Sense of the ancient Heathens: Some of their Victorious Commanders did, now and then, out of Pride or Passion, insult the Religion of conquered Nations; but I know of none so weak, as to think it good Policy to endeavour to unite Kingdoms by Force of Arms in the Externals of Religious Worship: *Holy Wars* are of a later Date: It is so clear to Reason and good Sense, where a vain Zeal does not blind them, that all the Ends of Government may be otherwise secured; that the Worship of God must be free and voluntary, or 'tis none at all; That Men's Minds must be enlightned by Instruction, and not compelled by the Sword; That we are not Masters of our own Opinions, any further than our Conviction leads us, much less can we yield up blindly to the imperious Dictates of other People; That the wisest Legislators will seek to establish their Authority upon the known and stable Principles of securing the Lives, Liberties and Welfare of their Subjects, rather than upon the intricate and impossible Scheme of compelling
them

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them to an entire Unity in Matters of Religion.

THE best Writers have constantly endeavoured to express their Minds very fully upon this Subject, " Those Actions (says Bishop *Burnet*)
" which concern Human Society, belong to the
" Authority of the Magistrate, but our Thoughts
" with Relation to God, and such Actions as
" arise out of those Thoughts, and in which
" others have no Interest, are God's immediate
" Province, and can belong to no other Jurisdiction: God only knows our Thoughts,
" and He alone can change them; so that a
" Magistrate, by encroaching upon Them,
" breaks in upon God's Propriety, and upon
" that essential Right of Human Nature of worshipping God according to our Conviction.
These are commonly the Thoughts of all sorts of Men, if Themselves are but under the Apprehensions of a Compulsion; and 'tis no Wonder that the King's Enemies could make their Use of his unhappily falling into a Mistake in this Matter, and raise the Divisions of the People to a greater Height, by adding to them the fiercer Fuel, which is abundantly afforded by Disturbances about Religion.

BUT 3^{dly}, The last and most fatal Cause of the Mischiefs of this Day were the Distempers
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of the People. If there had been any Virtue or true Principle in the Zealots of these Days, after all the Mistakes and Errors of the Administration, the King and Kingdoms might have been entirely Happy : for tho' the King had been misguided; as what Prince might not? especially, if influenced by such Men as He unhappily had about Him, and almost entirely without a single Person, to represent to Him the true State of the Nation; yet He was at all Times ready to correct his Mistakes, and to enter into all possible Measures to prevent them for the future. The Grievances complained of were abundantly redress'd, and every Uneasiness removed; in a Word, so much was every Way done for the Repose of his People, that an *uncorrupted Posterity*, that shall look into these Affairs, *must allow the King to have given sufficient Monuments of the most fatherly Affection to Them.* But how dangerous are the Tumults and Divisions of a Nation! there had been such Encouragement given to popular Disturbances, under a Notion of redressing Grievances by them, that the Authors of them, when they were expected to return to their Duty, began to think Themselves too considerable to be quiet. It has been thought, that if the King had immediately gratify'd the Leaders of the Faction with the Administration of Affairs, He might thereby have subdued that Spirit to Him-

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Himself, which for want of being so quieted, still proceeded to inflame the Kingdom: But whether this would have been true is uncertain; for 'tis hard to be conceived, that a factious Subject should make a good Governor; for tho' their Conditions are different, yet they are pretty near the same unharmonious Passions of Pride and Insolence, which cause Sedition in the one, and Tyranny in the other; and We see in Fact that the pretended Patriots, who took off a King, and overturn'd the whole Frame of Three Nations, under Pretence of preserving the Civil and Religious Liberties of the People, were when in Power, the greatest Tyrants both in Church and State.

THE King by Degrees drew to Himself all the Worth and Loyalty of the Kingdom, for the Men of Honour and Integrity came over to Him; but the Strength and Power was unhappily got into other Hands: And if we but reflect upon the several Tempers of the then governing Spirits, What less could have happened, without a Miracle, from the Administration of such Men, so advanced to Power as they were, but some prodigious Mischief? When a People is broke loose from all Reverence to and Restraint of their Rulers, and intoxicated with a Notion of preserving the

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Public, by destroying every Appearance of their ancient Government, What can be expected but a various Confusion for a Time, and at last their falling a Prey to such Men, as by carrying on the public Ferment, and still distancing their Associates by new Schemes, shall perhaps at last set up and establish Themselves?

BUT I am in the Third and Last Place to consider, what we may learn for our own Instruction from the Calamities of this Day. There are unanswerable Reasons against our repining at or complaining of any of God's Judgments, how severe soever they may seem to be: God does often suffer the Worst of Men, for his own Purpose, to compleat the Measure of their Iniquities: but this is in no wise an Argument of his Favour to them. And He may permit the most innocent Person to be afflicted, not out of Anger, but of Love: The greatest Prince, the best of Men, may be made still better by the Pressure of Calamities, and thereby, whatever be their Sufferings in this World, they may obtain thro' them a brighter Crown, *a far more exceeding Weight of Glory* in the Next. And as We ought not to repine at God's Appointments, so neither should We endeavour to revive the Memory of past Things, in order to raise Party-Resentments, and

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and to impute them to one another, to make the Day a Day of Strife and Division; for what a Folly is it to rake up the Evils of a former Age, to disturb the Repose of our own Times? Rather, as often as We view this Calamity, let Us do it in Order to establish amongst Us such Principles, as may make Us an happy People both in Church and State; let Us learn from it *to obey our Magistrates*, to be Subject to those, *that have the Authority over us, to lead quiet and peaceable Lives under them in Godliness and Honesty*, and to avoid and detest the Mischiefs of Faction and Rebellion: But let us not content our Selves with some transient Notions of these Things, but in Deed and in Truth make our Selves good Subjects.

WHEN the Restoration took Place, it was natural for a People so long tossed with so many Storms, to have some Aversion to the Authors of it's Troubles, and to run into Opinions, as opposite as possible, to those of such Adversaries: An Humour of this Sort led our Fathers, almost insensibly, from the old British Sense of Government into a more refined and speculative Scheme of Allegiance, but in a few Years what were the Fruits of it? — God has placed Us in an Age, where We may look back and see the Trial and Worth of the Principles that are offered to us: An Opinion of the
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the Doctrine of *passive Obedience* betray'd the late unhappy King JAMES into his Ruin: He thought Himself Safe in his unwarrantable Schemes in the Hands of the Professors of this Principle: But this Principle was but a Reed —. On the other Hand, the Men that made this Profession thought Themselves the Assertors of a most venerable Loyalty, but They quickly found, that they had been binding up Burthens, which could never be born —. I would not enter too far into the Scene of our Contests; but since a Notion of this Principle has betray'd too many into a Dislike of the Foundations of our Present Government; I wish for their own Sakes I could put Them upon a serious Review of it, for I should think, if They did but see, that it has always sunk either the Prince or the People influenced by it, They would reject it for ever: But if they will not, let the Friends of the Government maintain their own Steadiness: God has given Us a King truly determined to promote the Welfare and Happiness of his People; and We are under an Administration, that dispenses the Happiness of a good Government throughout the Nation: But it has been pretended, that our Principles are but uncertain; that We can dislike our Governors, when We please, and find Pretences to withdraw our Affection and Allegiance —. Let it be the Business of the present Age, and our Posterity

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Posterity to confute and silence this Calumny. A Prince and a People united unto one another for the public Good, are upon the surest Foundations of being happy; for "tho' there
" is a Craft and a perpetual Subtlety, that Men
" of private Interest may work with, to carry
" on Views and Ends of their own; yet the
" true Interest of a Kingdom is the plainest
" Thing in the World; It is what every Body
" may find and feel, and They cannot be long
" a finding it neither. Uneasy Spirits may be
unsettled in Times of the greatest Prosperity;
But who can be ignorant, whether he has the
Enjoyment of his Laws and Religion? And if
he has, what honest Man will be led away by
any private Discomposures? — It has been ob-
served, that many Nations after a long and
virtuous Contention for an happy Settlement;
have no sooner arrived at it, but by intestine
Divisions they have fallen from it again. Times
of Difficulty and Danger do indeed unite Men's
Hearts in proper Measures to provide for their
Safety; but a publick Happiness is apt to dis-
engage their Intention, to give a careless Way
of thinking, and to make them more easy to
be seduced and corrupted: But, God be thank-
ed, We are not yet fallen into this Weakness.
The King has been pleased to declare, that He
will *make the Happiness of his People his own
Glory*, and our Superiors have expressed an en-
tire

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ture Concurrence in every Measure for the public Service —. That Spirit is not yet enfeebled, which must preserve the Kingdom —. It is only to be wish'd, that the same Unanimity may spread over the Nation, that we may know our true Interest, and be truly disposed in our proper Sphere, to maintain and enjoy it; that neither the Arts and Pretences of our Enemies, nor any Weakness and Infirmary of our own, may ever be able to divide us, first from our Country, and then from one another.



T H E E N D.

